1:Marshall E-5 (1952-1953) 1959 FX10 Bushmen FX10
Kung

considerable difficulty with the interpretation, but I believe they finally understood what I was trying to say. They did, they said, and added that one sleeps very well afterwards.

Co-wives attain varying degrees of harmony. The expression of jealousy, especially loud wrangling, upsets everybody, as all expression of discord does. Women are trained by group approval to mould their conduct to acceptance. But often painful jealousy does beset them, and the tensions are there, though to some extent hidden.

/Aha, wife of a young /Ti/kay in Band 13 at Gam, and still a young woman herself, had with her fierce jealousy driven /Khoa, the pretty young second wife, wailing into the night, back to her family's scherm. /Ti/kay used to sit for hours upon hours singing soft, sad, sweet laments for /Khoa, but she did not return to live with him.

The behaviour of /Naoka and Di/ai, the wives of the medicine man, Gao, in Band 1, was more typical. Both women were approaching middle age, Di/ai somewhat younger than /Naoka. /Naoka had two married daughters and a teen-age son when Gao married Di/ai. The two women obviously disliked each other, but managed to preserve a decent semblance of harmony by self-control, silence, avoiding each other as much as possible in the small space they live in by their fire, and by separating often—going with different groups of relatives and friends to gather wild plant foods, to fetch water, or to visit.

A few men said that the jealousy of co-wives could be so unbearable that they would not marry a second wife, but one said it made him feel good to have two women fighting over him. Most of the men said they wanted more than one wife. They pitied Laurence Marshall because the laws of his land forbade his having several, which they considered him rich enough to afford. One said he would not live where there were such nonsensical rules.

The first wife is considered to have a somewhat more highly esteemed and dominant position. She is supposed to have the right to tell a second wife what to do, and a young second wife should fetch water and wood for the older wife, but I never saw this done.

No property or other material advantage is given a first wife and no important social advantages accrue. For instance, headmanship is inherited by the headman's eldest son by whichever wife he may be borne, and being the mother of a headman does not place a woman above other mothers of sons.

It appeared to me that first wives were often at a disadvantage. Among the people we knew, the husbands favoured their younger, second wives with two exceptions: /Ti/kay of Band 9 favoured his first wife, the elder sister, and Gao, the headman of Band 2, favoured his first wife. Both were good-tempered, intelligent, able women. They appeared to take care of the young girls who were their co-wives, rather than to be served in any way by them. Other older first wives seemed sometimes to be dejected. One told me her husband always took the young second wife with him and, to her deep humiliation, sometimes left her, the first wife, to stay for a time with one or another family in the band, although she said to him, 'Why do you shame me so?'

None of the /Kung women informants expressed enthusiasm for polygyny. Each wanted a husband to herself. They did not expound the social advantage which

/21 cont./

157 them thought of asking a question about it. The Bushmen of today at least do not believe that any kind of magic is concealed [177] in the Europeans' machines. They learn to use European instruments fairly quickly; in particular, they soon become familiar with the rifle. Dornan reported that there was a large number of improvised rifles that the Bushmen had adapted. In a new environment, the Bushman is wholly self-possessed and coolly observant. He is highly adaptable. The girls, of whom a number [648] are kept by farmers as concubines, are quite skillful at housekeeping. In Ovamboland they quickly adopt the living [177] habits and economic activities of the Bantu. An Ongandjera Bushman acts as an instructor at the teacher's college in Oonipa. He owns a small kraal that is well-maintained in Ovambo fashion and, in addition, has built himself a round hut of tiles in which [648] he keeps his "library." They seldom stay long on the farms, but [147] probably in the main because the food does not agree with them. 609 The Bushmen are most distrustful of other people. Every armed person whom they encounter is regarded from the outset as an enemy. The Bushman is allowed to enter the regions of other tribes only if he is unarmed. Even along the edge of the farm zone the mutual distrust is so great that a Bushman who has been sent to a farm as a messenger dares not leave the road, which is regarded as a neutral zone, if another kin group has settled in the vicinity. If two armed Bushmen who are strangers approach each other, they disarm at first sight before they greet each other. When a Bushman comes to a village or to a farmhouse, he will put down his arms at a certain distance and sit down to wait patiently, if need be for hours, until he is questioned. A 186 609 distinct sense of race is not apparent. Everything that does not belong to one's own kin group is regarded as strange, even hostile, except when common persecution causes a sense of solidarity to spring up among all those who are persecuted. At the same time, they very clearly possess a kind of sense of humanity as a whole, that is, they do not believe that they are the only people, and they are convinced, for example, that the people of all races are received in the heavenly house. Their 602 conduct toward relatives is regulated by numerous customs, but in general it is formal and almost ceremonial, even toward the [593] wife and children. The Bushman is never importunate. [157]